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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 002367

SIPDIS

DOD FOR OSD/APSA/SHINN/SEDNEY/HILL/BASALLA; PACOM FOR
J00/J01/J5; USFJ FOR J00/J01/J5; NSC FOR WILDER/KATZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [MARR](#) [RS](#) [GG](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: MOFA EUROPEAN AFFAIRS DDG ON JAPAN-RUSSIA-GEORGIA

Classified By: James P. Zumwalt, Charge d'Affaires, a.i.; Reasons: 1.4
(b/d)

SUMMARY

1. (C) In an August 28 meeting, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) European Affairs Bureau Deputy Director General (DDG) Kanehara assured visiting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD)/East Asia David Sedney that Japan would continue to join the United States and the international community in expressing outrage to Russia for its actions on Georgia, but urged Washington to give Tokyo clearer guidance on the extent to which the U.S. Government was willing to pressure Russia. DDG Kanehara sought U.S. help as the Japanese government refined its own strategy. Kanehara underscored that Japan had little leverage over Russia and that Moscow was likely to ignore diplomatic gestures. The Japanese government planned to cancel visits to Russia by three senior Japanese defense officials, but intended to move forward with a toned-down planned joint search and rescue operation with Russia. Sedney urged Kanehara to examine closely how Japan could join others in acting to get Russia to behave properly. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) DASD for East Asia David Sedney met August 28 with MOFA European Affairs Bureau Deputy Director General Nobukatsu Kanehara in response to the latter's last-minute request to discuss the situation in Russia and Georgia. Kanehara outlined Japan's position as follows: 1) Russia's behavior was unacceptable and necessitated strong reaction from the international community; 2) Japan intended to stand in unity with the United States and other nations to send a clear message to Russia that its actions were in clear violation of international law; and, 3) it was extremely important for the United States to exercise leadership in light of the relatively muted reaction from European countries, such as Germany. The problem, Kanehara noted, lay in Russia's tendency to ignore diplomatic expressions of outrage unless real pressures were applied.

3. (C) Japan, in particular, faced difficulty in finding an

effective way to express its displeasure to Russia as it had little leverage, Kanehara asserted. The Japanese government planned, for the time being, to cancel three senior-level defense visits between the two countries and to re-examine plans for lower-level visits. However, it remained inclined to move forward with a planned joint search and rescue exercise (SAREX) the week of September 8 as it was a humanitarian exercise designed as a confidence-building measure between the two militaries and represented the culmination of a long-term effort by the Japanese Self Defense Forces to engage the Russian military. The exercise would now not include any festivities or dinners and would be as low-key as possible. The Japanese government would change the venue from Sasebo -- which had U.S. naval vessels -- to the port of Maizuru.

14. (C) Kanehara observed that, although the Japanese government would review its policy decision to continue with the SAREX in accordance with the evolving situation between Russia and Georgia, Russia was not likely to be affected by a postponement or cancellation of the exercise. To that end, he asserted, Japan and the United States needed to have a common strategy for delivering the right message to Moscow. Alleging that the United States, the UK, and other Western countries had stopped short of using economic leverages and focused almost exclusively on restricting military contacts with Russia, Kanehara stressed that Japan needed guidance. Without knowing the extent to which the United States Government was willing to exercise its leverages, Japan could not effectively form its strategy, Kanehara said.

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15. (C) DASD Sedney promised to report Kanehara's points to Washington. Sedney reiterated the U.S. position that the international community needed to speak with one voice and deliver a strong message to Russia. We welcomed continued close coordination with Tokyo, but it was important that the Japanese government express its own voice, not just echo others. International standing remains important to Russians and when Japan expressed outrage and opposition, both Moscow and others in the international community would listen. Sedney appreciated Japanese cooperation on the August 27 G-7 statement condemning Russia's actions. He urged the DDG Kanehara to monitor the evolving situation closely and to make any recommendation to his government only after Kanehara and his staff had a clearer picture of Russian actions and continuing responses by other nations.

16. (U) DASD Sedney has cleared this message.
ZUMWALT